

# It's All About Sportsmanship

Robertson, Thorne  
are nominated  
for award.

BY RICH SANDERS  
THE GAZETTE

**T**wo Alexandria Youth Sports individuals — coach Louis Robertson and athlete Danielle Thorne — will be honored at the upcoming Mid-Atlantic Recreation & Parks Sports Alliance Awards Ceremony, scheduled to take place the evening of Monday, Jan. 31. The event will be held at the Maryland State House in Annapolis beginning at 7:30.

The two, both a part of the youth sports program within the Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, were nominated for the Sportsmanship Award — Thorne, 13, as an athlete and Robertson as a coach.

**"You teach them the fundamentals, they'll always have that."**

— Louis Robertson

The Sportsmanship Award was created to highlight positive sportsmanship attributes within local communities within Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia. Local youth groups/jurisdictions were allowed to nominate one player and one coach for the award. Robertson and Thorne are Alexandria's nominations.

Robertson has been a dedicated and successful youth coach within Northern Virginia over the past 18 years. This past fall, he was coach of the 95-pound Alexandria Titans (Americans Division) and led the team to the Fairfax County playoffs. In the spring, Robertson is a youth coach within the Prince William County Soccer League, and in the summer he is a baseball coach within the Woodbridge Little League program. He has also coached winter basketball over the years.

Robertson, who was nominated as Alexandria's "coach" representative for the Sportsmanship Award by youth football commissioner Jim Gibson, said he was surprised by the honor. During his many years coaching youth sports, he has loved seeing his athletes go on to compete at the high-school level and sometimes even the collegiate level. He has always preached fundamentals and good attitude to his players.

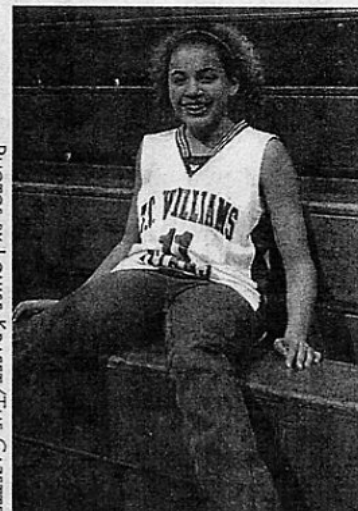
"When I'm dealing with kids, I accept them as my kids," said Robertson, a Dale City resident. "I want them to have a good attitude. I'm not going to put up with a kid with a bad attitude. ... [On the field of play] I think the most important thing is teaching kids the fundamentals of the game. You teach them the fundamentals, they'll always have that."

Robertson loves teaching and working with young people as a coach.

"He establishes a real relationship with the kids," said Mac Slover, the Youth Sports Supervisor in Alexandria city. "He keeps up with [the kids' school] grades and makes sure they're doing the right things. He just



Louis Robertson



Danielle Thorne

PHOTOS BY LOUISE KRAFT/THE GAZETTE

wants a child to have the opportunity to succeed."

In his recommendation for Robertson's nomination, Gibson wrote, "His coaching has not only resulted in success on the playing field but has spread to many other areas in the lives of the hundreds of lives he has touched. ... You can find him following the careers of former players years after they have left his programs. Once you are a part of his team, you are the recipient of the loyalty that defines who he is."

**THORNE**, an eighth-grade honor roll student at Hammond Middle School, is the "player" Sportsmanship Award nomination from Alexandria. She has competed within the Alexandria youth sports program in bas-

ketball, softball, volleyball, and track and field. This past fall, she was a member of the T.C. Williams freshman girls volleyball team and is currently a member of the Titans' freshman girls basketball squad.

"She's an all-around athlete," said Slover. "She demonstrates such a commitment and positive attitude. I've never seen her get upset with coaches or fellow players. She carries herself very well."

Thorne, who also enjoys activities such as band and ballet, was a student council secretary and a National Science Merit Award winner in

2003. Last year, she was an inductee for the National Honor Society and an award-winner for the Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth.

"In sports, Danielle's demonstration of commitment, positive attitude and above else, sportsmanship, has earned her the respect of her teammates, coaches and officials," Slover wrote in a nomination statement of Thorne. "Danielle never allows anyone to be larger than the team. She looks down on negative actions against fellow teammates or opponents. Sportsmanship is the highest of expectations for her. ... Danielle has remained the same caring, energetic [person], willing to always help out others [and] positive, respectful, never [taking] herself too seriously as a leader."

## WP Hurt by Turnovers

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to the hole," said West Potomac coach David Houston. "He shot 7-of-10 [from the field]. I thought he rebounded pretty well."

Baker played a fairly solid game, and has

sooner or late it would take a toll on them."

The game was close until the final minutes when the Titans, ahead by just two points with three minutes to play, broke things open.

## Titan girls fall to Wolverines